



All un-electrified villages to be lighted using Renewable Energy

Households in remote villages of Gurez Tehsil in Jammu & Kashmir will now be illuminated by Solar lights. The Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Dr. Farooq Abdullah today dedicated the solar homelighting systems installed in 3900 households in 27 villages of Gurez tehsil to the people of the area. The solar lights will enable 30,000 people living in these villages to enjoy the benefits of modern lighting – thanks to the power of solar energy. Illumination provided by the lights will be sufficient not only for all household chores but also for reading and writing and other fine tasks.

The Gurez valley in North Kashmir manifests the natural beauty of Kashmir in its full glory. However, it had been deprived of conventional electrification due to its remoteness. It was in light of this that a decision was taken to provide solar lights to all the households in the remote villages of Gurez. The project costed around Rs.5 crores of which the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India contributed around Rs.4.5 crores. The balance has been contributed by the state government.

The Remote Village Electrification Programme of the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, under which this project has been taken up, aims to provide renewable energy based lighting/electricity solutions to all those villages in the country where grid will not be able to reach in the near future due to technical or economic reasons. The Ministry provides financial support of 90% of the costs for such projects to the state implementing agencies. More than 9400 remote villages in 24 States have been taken up so far under the programme. For the 11th Plan, the government has recently approved an allocation of Rs. 867 crores for coverage of 10000 remote villages and hamlets.

In so far as the State of J&K is concerned, a data base of 284 un-electrified villages and 28 hamlets for coverage under the RVE programme of the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Government of India has been prepared. The Ministry has already sanctioned 3 projects for extending basic lighting facility to 145 un-electrified villages. **Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Farooq Abdullah announced and assured that his Ministry would sanction the projects in favour of rest of the villages in next two years.**

The solar lights comprise of a solar photovoltaic module which converts solar radiation to electricity which is used to charge a battery. The storage capacity of battery is such that it can light up 2 lamps for 4-5 hours each per day for 2-3 days. A charge controller prevents overcharging and deep discharging of batteries in periods of high sunshine and overcast skies respectively. The systems do not require any maintenance except for periodic topping up of batteries. A 5 years Annual Maintenance Contract with the suppliers is part of the financial support. Many representatives from each of the beneficiary villages have also been trained in minor maintenance and upkeep practices for these systems.

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and the Government of Jammu and Kashmir had earlier provided similar lighting systems to more than 8200 homes in Doda and Kupwara districts. The enthusiastic acceptance of these systems by the beneficiaries further motivated the state to take up many more villages for similar benefits. A project for covering 68 villages in Anantnag, Kulgam, Budgam, Pulwama and Shopian districts has already been approved by the Centre with a financial

assistance of around Rs.15 crores. JAKEDA is also working on proposals for covering around 150 more villages where grid extension will not be possible in near future. In addition, solar lighting systems are also being provided with financial support from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy for use in hospitals, schools and many other public buildings. These will help the state save substantial amounts of diesel which is presently used for providing electricity. The Ministry is also supporting the state in drawing up plans for exploitation of its huge potential for perennial energy sources such as its flowing water streams and wind so that the quality of life of its people could be further improved.